

THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
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Office of the Acting Consul General

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American Consulate Launches First Exchange Program for Bermudians

The American Consulate announces that, for the first time, Bermudians will participate in the US Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). The IVLP is a formal exchange program that supports visits by foreign nationals to the US, where they can meet, learn from and share ideas with their professional counterparts. Programs are designed around the interests of the participants and with their active involvement. Nominees identify programs in the US of interest to them and work with IVLP programming specialists in Washington, who develop an itinerary for the participants.

To make this inaugural exchange trip, April 17-27, 2005, the American Consulate has chosen a team of five Bermudians whose interest is in improving and expanding services available to Bermuda's youth. Leading the team will be Dr. Derrick Binns, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Community Affairs and Sport. Also representing that ministry will be Mr. Keith Smith, coordinator for youth programs. Other participants will be Chief Inspector Michael Jackman, Bermuda Police Service; Ms. Shane' Simon, CURE; and Mr. Milton Richardson, de Boys Day Out Club.

The project participants will be visiting programs in the US focusing on youth development. During this trip they will explore the role of community groups in shaping the development of youth. The team will examine how youth acquire the leadership skills necessary to improve community life, explore how young people are inspired to become responsible participants in society, and examine the variety of youth-related programs and the roles they play in leadership development and community building. The visitors will look at both public and private sector programs that work to help young people counter negative influences and reach

their potential. During the first week, the group will explore programs in and around Washington, DC, and Boston. The final days of the trip, however, have been set aside for more individualized travel as team members separate to visit programs geared to their specific interests in other cities, such as Detroit, Atlanta, New York and Baltimore.

Dr. Derrick Binns' focus will be the development of youth leaders and youth agencies. As coordinator of youth programs at the ministry, Mr. Keith Smith hopes to acquire new tools to enhance Bermuda's youth development programs and strategies. Chief Inspector Michael Jackman has the overall goal of developing families and communities through an enhanced police outreach effort to youth. Ms. Shane' Simon seeks to enhance race relations, diversity, cross-cultural competence, equality awareness and leadership among Bermudian youth. The objectives that Mr. Milton Richardson has set for himself on this trip relate to enhancing and developing more effective skills in mentoring and empowering young men, especially boys at risk. The goals of this Youth Development Project parallel the themes endorsed by Bermuda's own National Youth Development Strategy – developing leaders, enhancing family involvement and strengthening youth development agencies. The Consulate is convinced that these five team members will be able to make the most of their exchange experience and to apply what they learned once they return to Bermuda.

In addition to the essential programming and financial support of the staff in Washington DC, Bermuda's participation in the IVLP was made possible by the generous contributions of several local American benefactors. The American Consulate would like to publicly recognize Mr. Herbert Siggins and Ms. Betty Malpas of Continental Airlines, Mr. Alan Cossar, of the Aon Group (Bermuda) Ltd., Mr. James Stanard at Renaissance Re, and Mr. James Selvaggi. Their donations were pivotal in the success of the Consulate's first IVLP endeavor. The Consulate is also grateful to Premier Alex Scott, Minister of Community Affairs and Sport Dale Butler, Minister of Labour Home Affairs and Public Safety Randy Horton, Police Commissioner Jonathan Smith, and CURE chairman Clevelyn Crichlow for their support in developing this program.